DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 151 CS 502 826

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TITLE Foundations of the Self Awareness and Interpersonal Communication Workshop.
PUB DATE Nov 79
NOTE 65p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (65th, San Antonio, TX, November 10-13, 1979).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication (Thought Transfer); *Educational Attitudes; Educational Change; *Educational Development; Experiential Learning; Group Dynamics; *Humanistic Education; Interpersonal Competence; Interpersonal Relationship; *Self Actualization; *Sensitivity Training

ABSTRACT

A review of the history and development of experiential learning in its educational and therapeutic contexts emphasizes the value of self-awareness as a prerequisite to interpersonal and group development. It also serves to underscore the potential of the Self Awareness and Interpersonal Communication (SAIC) program in an American society with millions of people turning to human potential activities and the experiential learning process. SAIC seeks to provide a learning context where the self, others, and the interactions between the self and others can be examined as factors contributing to personal involvement in society. The general design of the SAIC approach is not unique; but the particular aspects of the design are altered by the people involved each time the program is offered. The design has consistently included the following elements: a small group participation designed to assist with developing greater self-awareness and consciousness of others; cognitive input sessions composed of structured experiences that promote understanding of the nature of self-awareness, group processes, and problems; keeping a journal for later examination of the experiences on a cognitive, analytical level; and post-conference analysis of experiences to note changes in awareness, communication skills, and the ability to use feedback and self-disclosure. (RL)

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FOUNDATIONS OF THE SELF AWARENESS
and
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

by

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The Person is the Focus of Experiential Learning

K. Patricia Cross, in her work on Accent on Learning said,

> "...education for personal development is an important responsibility of colleges and...we can do a much better job of it than we are presently doing...There is,... no excuse for not giving more attention to the establishment of the type of "community" in which educators demonstrate their interest in students' personal; as well as intellectual development." (1)

This theme is becoming more and more a matter of concern in education at all levels as the impact of humanistic theory and practice is being felt in the teaching process. We are becoming more cognizant of the deeper significance of the often stated principle that "Experience is the best teacher." Experiential education is becoming more widely recognized as a legitimate part of the college and university curriculum. In spite of hostility, from traditional academic disciplines who still contend that the sole function of the college or university is the dissemination of knowledge, the use of experiential teaching and learning centered in the personal and interpersonal is increasing.

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The error of the "traditional" point of view is that it assumes that knowledge is separate from the people who have it or want it, that it can be gathered and dispersed without regard to the people who are involved in the process of gathering and receiving. If our increased knowledge of the nature of the person has meant anything at all it has demonstrated quite clearly that learning takes place in a total human system. It is not possible to isolate a given bit of information (knowledge) from the person who is receiving it in the teaching-learning process.

If the center of the teaching-learning process is the learner then we must direct our attention to the nature of the learner. As learners you and I seem to function on the basis of our experience. That is, what we know and what we have learned come from our experiences. Even the act of acquiring a mathematical formula or a bit of historical information is in itself a kind of experience that involves the total person in the act of receiving and processing the information.

For a long time we have recognized that experience comes in many forms and combinations. Experience may be had directly when we are immediately and consciously involved in events from which we derive generalizations and information. Experience may be had vicariously when we observe others experiencing and find ourselves feeling and responding as if we were experiencing the main event ourselves.

Experience may be had in fantasy when our imagination creates events of which we are a part. Experience may be found through our empathetic conditions as we perceive others telling us of their events and being.

There appears to be a hierarchy of experience as we participate in the process of acquiring knowledge. The experience of the learner apart from the structure of the formal teaching-learning situation has no less an impact on the gaining of knowledge. In fact, there are many who believe that the structured teaching-learning situation may actually be less effective in providing intended knowledge and information to the learner than that expected in the non teaching-learning structure. "Experience is the best teacher" has long been a catch phrase but it does not clarify, necessarily, what experience teaches...or what the learner learns.

The long recognized organismic concept of the person and the subsequent interpretations in the form of "Wholistic" formulations of human behavior and being is beginning to have truly significant impact on the teaching-learning process. We are, as a result of much scientific study more fully aware of the existence of multitudes of factors involved in the human processes of being. Long ago we assumed that the mind was separate from the body and the body and mind from the soul. We can no longer do this for we have learned (by experience, of course) that we are a unified complexity with infinite interrelationships of all the known elements

of our being. Thus, any learning involves our total being. When my daughter learned that the flame of a candle could inflict pain when it was touched the learning was not isolated in her "mind" or "body". She learned it all over from experiencing the event. Prior to that moment she had been verbally warned, had been punished with minor pain inflictions in the form of slapped hands, etc. But all of the secondary conditioning efforts failed to accomplish what one second of actual contact with the flame produced. Her response was a total response and a bit of knowledge became part of her being.

To disseminate knowledge, therefore, means that we must create the kind of environment and circumstances whereby the learners can experience those events which lead to the knowledge they seek as well as the knowledge others may want them to have. In the latter case, however, we often clash with the choices of the learner. It appears that many of us are able to evade knowledge that we choose not to absorb. Thus, in the teaching-learning setting there must be an underlying assumption that the learner seeks the particular knowledge available. Without that goal or direction much of the process can be futile. Even when knowledge is "accidentally" acquired there must be a willingness to accept it or it simply falls on barren ground. Part and parcel of the learning environment therefore, is the learner and the context in which the learner perceives the learning

as necessary and meaningful. To ignore this may result in experiences that may lead to other than the chosen or desired learning. For example, most college and high school students, in the traditional schools, learn most thoroughly how to influence teacher behavior in order to get grades or learn how to avoid learning the things that society, in the form of the curriculum, seems to dictate must be learned. (Lack of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills may not be the result of inadequate instruction as much as it is simply not wanted by many students. Why learn to read if TV and cinema provide us with all that reading can give us? Why learn to write when there are those who can do it for us? Why learn to speak when we already are speaking? Why learn to listen when we already hear what we want to hear?) Obviously if we don't want the learning we are not likely to respond to any effort to get us to learn it. Can we now face up to this condition?

ANTECEDENTS AND RATIONALE

And now we come to a period in history when the term "experiential learning" is popular. Just what is this "new" thing? Well, it isn't so new as you would gather from what I have said before. For generations we have had "experiential" learning going on in our schools. Laboratory sciences were adopted into the Yale curriculum around 1830 after an intensive controversy. Their respectibility as college courses

came only gradually during the nineteenth century. Since the Civil War the land grant institutions have been responsible for "applied studies" in agriculture, sciences, etc. In the 1870s medical students at Johns Hopkins visited hospital wards as part of their training. We now have field studies in anthropology, botany, archeology, etc. (2)

Keeton and Tate defined experiential learning, "...in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied." (3) In this respect the experiential learning is not vicarious, fantasy, or indirect. That is, the learner does not just read about it, talk about it, write about it in the abstract but actually comes in contact with the events themselves, which carry the greater cargo of information. From purely the informational point of view the direct contact with the event provides greater potential of information because of the usual "line-loss" characteristics of information passed from person to person through any means of communication. This direct contact also makes it possible for the learner to be more in control of the information selected that when, through lecture, etc., the information is screened, reduced, etc., by the presenter.

It would seem that "experiential learning" is reaching into our past and returning to the verities of the ancient hunter who helped his sons learn to hunt by taking them hunting. And yet that is not sufficient. The experience of the event brings the learner into contact with the realities

being studied but it does not provide for the learner an organization or context into which the information gained from the contact can be screened, placed, and stored. The organization of the information for the use of the learner must be made by the learner also. This process requires the learner to examine the contact experience and to extract from it those informations that are significant and appropriate to the learner's being.

Indeed I am of the opinion that experience that is not reflected upon seriously cannot yield a full measure of learning. By reflecting upon an experience we can test the new learnings and prepare to refine them by further experience. Thus, as a teacher I see my function as to not only provide an environment of experiences which may yield information but also ways and means of reflection upon that experience which will yield learning. The mere gathering of information is not enough. That information must be put in context, tested and made the basis for further experiencing before it can be called learning. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is a meaningless effort. Knowledge and/or information that does not immediately or potentially serve to enhance, implement, protect, and/or expand the human condition is useless. Let's not confuse, however, the value of the knowledge itself with the process of acquiring knowledge. Sometimes it is valuable to discover information that may be useless simply to learn how to discover information.

A theory of learning arising from these assumptions was well described by Argyris and Schön. In their theory the concrete experience subjected to observation and reflection reveals the "theory-in-use." This theory, upon reflection, is modified to form a new "espoused theory" which is followed by testing this new theory in a new situation which leads to another concret experience, etc. (4)

In searching for a new model of education there is a serious need to improve our ability to deal with human problems. (5) Clearly, in an era when we are able to put men in space and send inquiry to Jupiter and the sun, the lag in our ability to deal with ourselves and each other as people is painfully apparent. We have concentrated on developing our excellence in dealing with things and with ideas, but we have, at the same time, anguished over the failure of the larger society. We have not concerned ourselved to any great extent with educating for intra and interpersonal effectiveness that affects that larger society so significantly. The need for interpersonal skills is becoming more and more critical as our scientific concern with things make it possible for us to communicate with each other more widely, more rapidly, and more intensely than ever before in history.

This is not to say that there have been no efforts in that direction through our history. Certainly the New England Town Meeting had some impact on developing interpersonal skills. Around 1850 the folk high schools in

Denmark were centered on people meeting together in small groups to discuss their problems and the ways and means of meeting them through mutual effort. (6) People have drawn together on small groups with increasing frequency and numbers since the latter part of the nineteenth century. In Sweden, in Nova Scotia, and in multitudes of study groups such as the Antigonish Movement of St. Francis Xavier University programs have contributed to the development of the small group as a context for people dealing with each other to solve problems mutually. In 1923 the INQUIRY movement was founded in the U.S. to stimulate interpersonal and group discussion of community social problems.

E. C. Lindeman, as far back as 1925, called attention to some of the assumptions that were important in the process of social integration and development encouraged by the Inquiry group. He pointed out that "...the group is not a new entity but rather a new relation (underline mine) and that relatedness is an appropriate sphere for scientific investigation, especially in the realm of human affairs where the relatedness may be accompanied by consciousness."(7) He further postulated that the group is a relation between individuals.

The exploration of that relationship began to develop quite rapidly in the late 1930 and the 1940s. In the 1940s a number of studies were done at Northwestern, Teachers College of Columbia University, Syracuse, and other schools. (8)

While the thrust of most of these studies showed the emphasis on the processes of rational thinking involved in joint deliberations, throughout all of them was a recognition of the significant interpersonal dimensions that were involved. Alma Johnson (Sarett) later experimented with the use of the discussion method in teaching the basic speech class. (9)

During the World War II period it became clearer that the group was an effective way of developing learning about each other as people as well as a context in which decisions could be made by people working together. Kurt Lewin, in the 1940s, was highly instrumental, along with Leland Bradford and Kenneth Benne, in stimulating greater interest in groups as a system wherein learning and change could take place. The concept of the "T-Group" was introduced at Bethel, Main in the First National Training Laboratory on Group Development in 1947. It was then called the "Basic Skill Training Group. (10) From that concept and experience, the idea of the "T-group" arose as a context wherein the processes of decision making, interpersonal communication, etc., could be experienced, observed, and analyzed.

The concept of the "T-group" underwent changes as the NTL continued its growth and development over the years. A lot of the theory and the experience was related to the work that Lewin had introduced under the term "Group Dynamics." (11)

Lewin's theories were at least partially founded on the effect of dynamic forces of the social setting on the behavior of the individual. Obviously the interpersonal issue was critical to the whole scheme.

These early efforts and the use of "T-groups" were very controversial. At several stages the hostility toward the work was so great that professional reputations were in jeopardy if they gave recognition to the work on interpersonal relations in such groups. (12) Even now, at the end of the 1970s there is still a great deal of hostility, particularly in academic circles, in spite of the fact that millions of people have become involved in the processes and their derivations.

> Among some academics, the hostility persists even in the 1970s. Many faculty members who consider themselves open-minded and enlightened and eager to learn are frank to admit that they know nothing about group work in interpersonal relations but that they are adamantly opposed to it. They are embarrassed and uncomfortable in the presence of talk about "sensitivity training" or even the less emotionally charged "human relations education." (13)

One of the characteristics of the developments coming from the "T-groups" is that the greater portion of the work is done in an isolated non-threatening cultural island setting in the form of a human relations <u>laboratory</u> type of experience. The theme behind many of the programs is that in order to observe and analyze the critical behaviors in the interpersonal and personal development systems we need to bring people together in a context away from their usual

social setting. The idea of the laboratory has been described as, "...an educational strategy which is based primarily on the experiences generated in various social encounters by the learners themselves, and which aims to influence attitudes and develop competencies toward learning about human interactions." (14)

Another characteristic of the various systems that have developed from the "T-group" base is that the experiences are for basically undisturbed people. The basic design and the development of the whole "T-group"-sensitivity-group process movement has been directed toward relatively healthy or "normal" people in order to facilitate their development of skill, insight, and understanding of interpersonal interaction. It was not the intent of the early programs to provide therapy for the correction of personal and emotional problems. Their thrust was in emphasizing the development of talents and strengths and encouraging exploration of the self and the interpersonal relations we always face. Leland Bradford, director of NTL for twenty five years describes the early intent and direction of the programs:

> NTL...was based on a nontraditional concept of teaching and learning in the areas of individual, group, and organizational behavior... we thought that education, re-education, and resocialization came best from experiential learning...the purpose of education or training was that of the whole person...a dichotomy between cognitive information and feeling data was incorrect, that a dichotomy between the person and his roles led to malfunctioning...

> ...it was an educational or re-educational or resocialization program directed first toward adult learners with the goal of helping them become better group leaders and members, sensitive to the dynamic forces in groups and in themselves, and more competent agents of change in their roles and organizations.

Bradford's history dramatically describes the infusion of the therapy issue beginning in the summer program of 1949, (which I had the good fortune of attending) and of the resulting struggles within the organization and its program to resolve the issues between education as such and therapy. NTL itself, in Bradford's perception, "...has held to the concept of education or re-education or resocialization."(16) In spite of this thrust a number of "clinical-type" people from the therapy enterprise went to NTL as trainers and counselors over the years. Many of these were from the West coast. So there grew up on the West coast a number of programs that had heavy therapy overtones. The work at Esalen under Fritz Perls is an example. The influence of Carl Rogers is another.

None of the adaptations, however, alter the fundamental condition and purpose of the "T-group" nor its significance as an educational method. Certainly, in the last decade we have seen many of the tools of the "T-group" applied to the therapeutic enterprise and tools of the therapeutic enterprise used in the educational context of the so called "T-group". This exchange of tools does not change the essential purpose

of the two enterprises. Their ultimate purpose is different. The therapeutic enterprise aims to assist those who are unable to operate satisfactorily as people in a more or less normal fashion. The educational enterprise is aimed at facilitating the personal growth and to increase the quality of the personal world of persons who are not having debilitating difficulties in behaviors. Both have gained from each other but neither has taken over the function of the other. At the extreme level of differences between the two are quite clear. However, we cannot ignore the fact that there is a border where the two systems come very close together.

NTL discovered, in 1948, that the stress of the cultural island concentration of factors of interpersonal behavior, etc., often creates barriers, pain, and anxiety for some few people who are unable to handle stress constructively. For these people, who are very difficult to screen out or discover before the stress episode takes place, some counseling or therapy type contact needs to be available. So, in 1949, NTL brought from Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in England and from other institutions in the U.S. several therapists to serve as counselors and to assist in identifying areas where stress problems might be handled more efficiently in the educational experience of the "T-group."

Over the years various laboratory type programs have allowed the therapy model to play a major role in the planning and design of their offering. This has not been true

of the NTL program. The group of the "encounter group" or "sensitivity training" concept on the West coast appeared to have more of the therapy aspects than did the "T-group."

During the fifties there was a kind of revolt (also felt at NTL) against theory and rationale and a rejection of "intellectualism." The pressure seemed to come from the belief that rational processes do not necessarily account for human behavior and that if we are to truly effect change and growth in human behavior we must deal with many of the so-called non-rational processes that affect our behavior. Many of these groups came to be known as "Therapy for Normals," or "Touchie-feelie" sessions.

The gap between the purpose and principles of the work of NTL and its "T-group" with the Encounter-sensitivity groups was felt very clearly in the 60s. Bradford says of this: "With the advent of Esalen and the many growth centers around the country advertising various brands of therapy as well as some laboratory training, considerable publicity resulted. Much was erroneously connected with NTL...NTL faced the problem of living with an image foreign to its activities." (17) (underline mine)

The issue was resolved in part at NTL through the growth of occupational laboratories, community, industrial, educational, programs based on the "T-group" theme and with strong programs of theory and research. NTL, however, did not let go of its major concern with both the personal

growth and development and the development of skills and understanding in group leadership and membership. In this sense the NTL program has remained unique and substantive. With its avowed purpose of being open to many disciplines and working toward a wholestic model of human behavior it was able to integrate the personal growth and sensitivity work with the leadership, group process and organizational development programs it offered. Therein lies its apparent ability to continue as a vital source of influence on American Education. Further, it demonstrates quite clearly that it is possible to deal with personal growth and development in the context of group and organizational concerns without playing the clinical or therapy "game." That many apparently sound programs are falsly labeled "touchie-feelie" therapy, etc., by the uninformed has done considerable harm to those programs that retain strong and well balanced educational thrust and model of learning. (This is not to deny that there are some programs that may merit the "touchie-feelie" label. The problem is that the "critics" too often fail to distinguish between the types.) I will have more to say about some of the current criticisms of the systems a little later in this paper.

The important thing to remember at this point is that a part of the problem of the issue between therapy and education and growth was and still is the basic misunderstanding, by many people, of the fundamental purposes and functions of

education and therapy. The therapist on the whole works from a medical model stressing the problem of dealing with an individual who is ill or debilitated so as to HEAL, or return the individual to a state of health. The teacher-trainer works from the model of facilitating the individual to change and to become more of what the person is capable of being.

There is no doubt that the field of clinical therapy has gained some techniques and some insight into the process of change and development from the educational experiment of NTL et al. At the same time it is clear that some of the techniques of the therapist can be useful to the trainer-facilitator in a "T-group" or a related group setting. A classic example of this latter is in the use and development of role-playing. J. L. Moreno is usually credited with being the initiator of the use of psychodrama as a therapeutic technique. (18) At the very first NTL laboratory at Bethel, Maine in 1947 some of the role playing techniques developed by Moreno were adapted for the "T-group" and in the general sessions to help participants perceive their functioning in groups and the relationships between members, etc. Role playing has become a very significant educational tool in the non-therapeutic educational settings. There are many other similar exchanges of tools between the disciplines.

The critical point is the <u>ability</u> of the trainer-facilitator to select and use the tools in a non threatening

and growth producing way. The factors of the trainer's skill and style and understanding may be at the very heart of the matter. (19)

A principle concept which underlies much of the work in experiential learning is the idea that we are capable of developing and/or maintaining healthy productive personalities. A great deal of the impetus toward this rationale comes from the work of Maslow and his idea of self actualization. The contributions of Rogers, Perls, Allport, Jung, Fromm, Frankl, and James are not to be overlooked since they all contribute to a growing affirmation of the perfectibility of personhood.

A central theme of the so-called human-potential movement is to find and define the "healthy" personality. Schultz points out that "The emphasis is not so much on healing childhood-related conflicts and past emotional wounds as on releasing hidden reservoirs of talent, creativity, energy, and motivation. The focus is toward what a person can become, not what he or she has been or is at the moment." (20)

Schultz suggests that it is possible to have no emotional illness, to have all our needs and drives satisfied, to have all facets of life functioning satisfactorily and still suffer boredom, hopelessness, meaninglessness, and stagnation. (21) (My late son-in-law used to call this his state of "existential ennui.") What becomes necessary, therefore, is an opportunity to expand and grow beyond what we would normally consider to

be a "healthy" person. Being "healthy" becomes then simply the first step toward the kind of growth that leads us to become more than we now are. As a matter of fact, if we look at the whole history of man this kind of reaching beyond what may be conceived as "satisfactory" is what has led to our growth and development as a race. The attitude of mind that seeks beyond satisfaction is the kind of divine discontent that leads us into new and higher reaches of our human ability. Certainly this assumption of the higher capabilities of the person is at the very heart of the experiential learning process. We must accept, also, that it has been implicit in our whole educational process from the very beginning. For what is the purpose of an education but to improve or make us better able to deal with the world than we now are? Human development has come from the human ability to reach beyond satisfaction for the exquisite.

Some additional characteristics of experiential learning in group laboratory situations are noteworthy.

The Group as the Technique

Fundamental to a great deal of experiential work is the small group as the context for developing change, etc. The difference between the small group as a training or growth experience and the small group as a task-centered experience appears as a central concern. Most of the experiential training programs use the small group not as a unit to perform

certain tasks external to the group or its members but to deal exclusively with the problems of the relationships among the members and the development of the group as an operating unit or team. The focus is upon problems which arise in the group itself rather than problems which are imposed from the outside. Such a focus requires a free flow of communication between persons in the group in the temporal context of the "here and now;" viability of the participants in their relationships with each other; openness to all kinds of feelings within and between the persons in the groups; recognizing the impact that people have on each other; and a level of spontaneity and creativity that will allow for maximum interaction and growth.

There is no doubt that the training group thus conceived must have a unique structure which permits the elements to appear. I look with some doubt on those who claim that they are using "unstructured groups" for growth training. The very essence of the growth group context is that it direct its attention to itself and to the individuals within it rather than to a problem or issue which is "laid-on" the group from the outside. And yet, in order to establish this context a certain kind of "structure" must be assumed. Perhaps the easiest way to point this out is to note that many people misinterpret the meaning of the "non-directive" leadership that is used in some growth-group settings. Simply because a group leader or trainer does not provide explicit

directions to a group or uses the so-called "non-directive" style of intervention does not mean that the group has no structure.

Groups have structure. No group can exist without structure. The very process of bringing two or more people together in a communicative relationship immediately sets in motion the formation of a structure. As a matter of fact the existence of a relationship represents a form of structure. What may be understood by the idea of an "unstructured group" is of a group without a pre-determined set of relationships or an "agenda" imposed upon it, left free to devise its own network of relationships, and to change them whenever they cease to be useful. This is in contrast to the work groups, family groups, task groups, etc., with which we are commonly concerned. In these there is usually a task, agenda(s), power structure, etc., However, it is my belief that there is no less structure in the so-called "unstructured groups" than there is in the formal task groups, etc. It is simply a structure with a different purpose and, perhaps, some variation in forms.

Cooper, et al., make the point that,

> ...experiential learning groups are specific groups which occur in a specific social context. To talk about such groups as if they are removed from that context, as if the goals and values that they express are 'universal ones' (free of social sanctions), as if people can act any way they want without impunity, is to create a myth about groups, and a very antisocial one at that-which is incapable of being enacted on in any real society. Unstructured groups, which allow total freedom

> to individuals to act and express anything they want, cannot produce any permanent change in individuals; the groups can only exist by themselves, and as soon as the group dispands the reality of the behavior disbands.

The area of discontent I have with Cooper's statement is the assumption that the "unstructured" group can truly exist. If it is a group it has structure. What Cooper seems to be saying is that groups that have the kind of structure which allows total freedom...etc., cannot produce permanent change. I question this.

While much of the research on so-called unstructured groups has been sketchy what has been done of significance indicates that some changes do take place in the individuals even in groups with minimum structure. In fact it is impossible for us to assume that no change takes place simply on the logic of human behavior. Each experience changes the total construct of the person, however small and infinitesimal it may be. We simply are unable to measure or identify those changes to date through the clumsy and inept instrumentation of human observation. The very logic of being indicates that no matter what we are doing, change is a constant. The issue is over the direction, the intensity, the social value, and the desirability of the changes taking place.

Part of the problem in dealing with the group as the technique, is its relation to the societal context outside the laboratory. Admittedly the group in the laboratory is

relatively isolated from the world from which its members come. There is real doubt, however, as to whether an "alternative society" is created thereby. My experience with groups over many years is that few if any real alternative societies emerge from these kinds of sessions. What seems to appear is one of several types of social contexts: 1 - a microcosm of the larger society from which the members have been drawn wherein the personal issues present in the larger society are simply more visible and more intense than in the larger context; 2 - a simple replication of the larger society with a focus on certain of the interpersonal aspects of behavior employed by the group members in that larger society; 3 - some variation of the larger society where the social roles may change in terms of the actors but the roles are still present and operating. (For example the leadership role is always present in any group, etc.); 4 - an experiment with some form of the larger society that hasn't been experienced before by the members of this group; 5 - a macrocosm/or blow-up of some small aspect of the larger society that allows for more precise examination of the aspects under focus. (Looking at the power factor in the group, for example.) etc. But in none of these have I experienced a true form of an "alternative society."

In spite of our many efforts at helping people make the transition from the laboratory setting to their prior social context it is usually difficult for the participant because skills and insights acquired at the laboratory may

be new to that individual and have not been perceived previously by the peer persons in the "back'home" context. Thus when the lab delegate returns home, acting different, there ensues some form of "culture shock" for both the delegate and those who did not share the lab experience.

So what's new? Parents always face this when their children go away to school for a year or so and return to the home circle...different people...talking a different language...being more aware of some things...less aware of others...etc. Friends moving away to another city are always different from the ones who left us when we get a chance to be with them again. Notice the culture shock of people who have spent some time in a foreign culture and returned to this country after a time. If the foreign culture is vastly different from ours, we find ourselves intensely aware of the differences in the person being away. So, I find nothing particularly unique about these problems. <u>They are constants as we move from one part of society to another</u>. Part of the task of the laboratories is to help the participants realize that they must deal with the perceptions of those "back-home" in a realistic way and as constants in our daily living. (This, in and of itself, can be a fruitful experience in a form of intra and intercultural communication.)

The function of isolating the group from the "outside" world is to provide an opportunity to look at forces and dimensions of personal and group life that are present in the

"outside" world but that cannot be examined quite so clearly or quite so thoroughly as in the isolated small group atmosphere. If a person experiences shyness, for example, in relation to members of another sexual orientation in the "outside" world that same experience will be present in the laboratory at the outset until the matter is allowed to be examined and discussed. (Which rarely happens in the "outside world.) Once the matter is encountered in the laboratory group the person may find some release from the shyness and be able to expand the relationship with persons of different sexual orientation. What happens when that person goes home? In most cases the first time the more open behavior is introduced in the old context there will be considerable shock by the people who had known this person before the lab. And, depending on the power of the social mileu into which the delegate returns, the old shyness will be forced back into existence or the new openness will prevail or a compromise may come to be.

This, of course, is a rather simplistic examination of a complex phenomenom in order to point out the crucial issue(s). Our research instruments and methods in human behavior have not allowed us to collect sufficient information to fully describe and define these conditions of re-entry and readjustment. However, we have seen the same kinds of problems between cultures, races, families, etc. <u>The laboratory culture does not take us away from these things</u>. It enables us to focus on some of the more significant ones and the more

poignant ones.

Another factor involving the group as the technique has to do with the difference between the pure dialogic communication as found in the thereapeutic relationship between clincian and patient and the kind of a social and more complex set of relationships that develop in the group context. Herein can be found many of the differences in the various kinds of experiential training programs. A lot of the encounter, sensitivity, self awareness, personal growth settings will encourage a great deal of one-to-one dialogue as part of the communication structure of the experience. In the Gestalt programs, for example, most of the work is focused on an individual interacting with the therapist or leader. Even when the session is in a group setting the interaction is almost entirely one-to-one with little or no concern for the group as a group or with little or no concern with the aspects of the interaction of the people in the group. When done in a group there is a lot of "carry-over" to other members of the group when one person struggles with a particular set of problems that may be emphathically experienced by others in the group. Also, when a person wants to experiment with a new behavior with others the presence of the group and the supportive atmosphere provides an excellent opportunity to try out the new behaviors and to test them without the danger of self destruction.

However, the group provides an important context for some forms of Gestalt work. (23) When this happens the line between therapy and growth becomes very blurred. It is just such conditions that have led to much misunderstanding of the personal growth experience. There are many people who experience the Gestalt group who are not in need of therapy. But they find in the experience an opportunity to explore themselves and to develop ways and means of dealing with themselves and others that makes them more effective human beings. (Of course, this assumes that the trainer-therapist is well qualified and that there is sufficient back-up for the person in case critical matters should lead to excessive difficulty.)

The group as the technical instrument for growth works at least in two directions. It can provide insight into the process of the group as a group and it can provide insight into the individual processes of each of the members. These are not necessarily always together when the group is the technical center. But in the current NTL concepts they are both objectives of the group effort. Certainly in the work we are doing at the SAIC workshop they are joined together.

Cooper puts it well, "...in T-groups we can encourage a sensitivity to other people, if only to the other members of the group. For that sensitivity underlies a greater sense of social responsibility." (24) (Underline mine) Thus, in being sensitive, we learn to adjust our behavior to acknowledge

the needs of other people with the end product being a kind of compromise to a broader committment to social freedom. It gives the other person the right to exist and be happy. And if we all could act in such a way, would this not be a good thing for humanity, too?"

Openness as a Condition

Talking about our own behavior and feelings to others is the significant characteristic of openness. In our society openness is very rare. The very nature of our social institutions militates against people being open with each other. Freud pointed out the repressive nature of civilization. (25) We are generally prohibited from expression of our infantile, narcissistic, and labile sexuality and aggression even though they exist. Expression of feelings is considered negative in our society and we are conditioned from almost birth to repress natural feelings that we may have. ("Boys don't cry." "It is wrong to tell some one you don't like him." "Don't be angry." etc.)

Openness by one person to another is often viewed as an invasion of privacy. (26) We often avoid openness because we perceive it as putting our working relationship with others in jeopardy. (27)

Kaplan points out that openness occurs only when there is strong collective identification, internal cohesion,

group solidarity, strong committment on the part of group members to one another and to the group itself, and mutual attraction of the members for each other. (28) Kaplan takes the position, endorsed by Laing (29) that we do provide much open information about ourselves through our non verbal signals and metacommunication and through injunctions to each other in the normal course of our relations with each other. (30) Openness, according to Kaplan, is determined by the boundaries which come from the purposes for which people come together and the values people hold in relation to their treatment of each other. He says it this way,

> ...to be open in a particular setting, is to abide by a particular set of role expectations. In a T-group, for example, constraints apply especially to criticism of, or feedback to, others. Feedback is to be based on concrete behavior presented descriptively and non-evaluatively, stated in terms of one's perceptions, framed in terms of the relationship rather than the person, and concerned with the 'here-and-now' rather than the biographical history of the participants. These prescriptions are responsive to the task of the T-group to educate people about themselves as persons-in-relation, without administering therapy and without applying undue pressure to the individual. (31)

Kaplan contends that openness can be promotive of education, regulation of moral and competent behavior, and integration of people socially and emotionally. He ends up by saying,

> ...it is feasible, short of coercion, only when social relations are characterized: (a) by a high level of collective commitment and interpersonal closeness, which in

> turn is associated with limited competition and minimal hierarchy, and (b) by institutionalization, or the deliberate effort to secure the willingness adoption of this atypical social practice. As an integrative device, it is capable of maintaining closeness, or of achieving it in relations with a rich potential for it. But it is inappropriate and virtually useless in disintegrative, competitive, and politicized situations... openness is viable chiefly within groups. It is irrelevant between groups which are in divisive relation... (32)

Kaplan's analysis is provocative in that it recognizes that openness is not just an invention of the T-group" ideology but that it is actually a part of every society even though it is generally suppressed or couched in implicit forms so that the explicit act need not be identified.

Jourard puts the issue to us in a strong way:

> Shall we permit our fellow men to know us as we now <u>are</u>, or shall we seek instead to remain an enigma, an uncertain quantity, wishing to be seen as something we are not? (33)

Jourard's position was that if we hide ourselves too well from others we lose touch also with ourselves and this, in turn contributes to a variety of illnesses. At this point the reason for the occasional merging of the training group for personal growth and the therapy group for therapy becomes apparent. Jourard approached the matter from a therapists point of view but translated it into a condition of growth and development for so-called "normals."

It is my personal belief that the fullness of communication between people cannot take place in the absence

of their awareness of each other and themselves. By concealing ourselves from each other we accentuate the alienation of ourselves from each other and from society as a whole. At the same time it is quite clear that effective disclosure must be appropriately timed and within the context which allows for the maximum value to accrue from it. (34)

There are some critical issues to openness and self disclosure that must be recognized and accounted for in any program of experiential education. One of the issues has to do with the relation of the self to the others. What if we disclose to others in order to assure our own growth and mental health only to alienate the others? Are we to sacrifice opportunities for optimal mental health in order to maintain the status of our interpersonal relationships with other people? These are powerful questions. Each one of us has to make the decision which these questions raise whenever we choose to reveal ourselves. Jourard provides some help in making this decision, "...we seek to have a true being in the experience of others under two conditions: when we experience it as <u>safe</u> to be thus known; and when we believe that vital values will be gained <u>if</u> we are known in our authentic being, or lost if we are not." (35) Thus, the guiding principle is "safety." What may be safe for me might be risky for you. How much value to put on the status quo of our relationships makes the decision often a difficult one. i.e., Do I value my status quo more than

myself being perceived as an authentic human being? If growth and change in my interpersonal relations can be enhanced by self disclosure and openness then I must decide originally how much growth and change I am willing to attempt.

Too many groups and training settings seem to have set a cultural standard of "gut spilling" as a prerequisite to success in that group. When the process is a myopic preoccupation with the curiosities of the other (the revealer) it can be useless and even dangerous. Obviously the person who spills his guts in a strange and non self-disclosing group will be perceived by that group as maladjusted. However, the risk that the disclosure takes goes back to the question which only the discloser can answer; namely what is the important value I must establish for myself in this relationship? It is clear there must be limits to disclosure.

However, the society tends to discourage disclosure and openness, we must recognize that every time we appear and attempt to communicate with each other we do reveal ourselves. Even so, the levels of our openness are the point at issue. C. C. Bennett addresses this issue:

> Secrecy within the community is incompatible with cooperation, inimical to the welfare and progress of the in group... Our dilemma will not be resolved by hiding away from each other in separate caves, but through more and more interpersonal communication,

> better managed...The critical problem... is not how to keep secrets but how to facilitate this readiness to communicate. The overriding question is how to maintain an atmosphere of trust and confidence which will enable us to talk about personal affairs...freely...the importance of honest communication in our interdependent relationships outweighs the sanctity of privacy as a social value.(36)

The function of openness in the training setting has to be understood in terms of the restrictions that are important. The pressure applied on individuals to be open should be moderated as much as possible so that the participants do not feel forced against their will to be or do something they do not choose to be. The content area of self disclosure should be confined to the experiences shared by the group. Dealing with history and experience that has nothing to do with what is happening in the group appears inappropriate. That kind of disclosure needs clearly to be left to the therapeutic situation. The disclosures of feelings about others in the group must be non-evaluative so far as possible. The process wherein I let you know how your last statement affected me without telling you whether you were therefore "good" or "bad" allows you to make the decisions for yourself as to the quality or value of your statement. These and other considerations must be basic restraints on the openness and disclosure in the training group if it is to function most effectively.

Me? You? Us? What is Pertinent?

From the very beginning of the "T-group: as a context of learning and development there have been detractors and critics. This is good. A sound movement and theory must be tested by the criticism and evaluation of its method and effect.

The scope of these attacks has been wide and variable. Some have been carefully and thoughtfully developed, others have been violent diatribes against straw men or single selected events or programs. Still others have represented serious and honest attempts to examine the phenomenon arising from the emphasis on learning processes through the small group experience. It is not my desire here to evaluate these evaluations, although the temptation is great. Recognition that their general existence is valuable and useful to the development of theory and practice is sufficient at this point. Many of the heavier critiques do warn against the human potential movement, against the "T-group," against self development and self awareness, against experiential and affective learning, against anything that would seem to provide for people in this culture some insight and some chance to counteract the massive suppression that the industrial and communication revolutions have brought upon us. Some of the critics admit concern for the individual, for growth, for the healthy person, for productive interpersonal relations, and for productive social change, etc.

But all of them are convinced that the small group and human potential movements are not the place to get these rewards. (37)

Once in a while a critic will have some process or concept to suggest in place of the thing attacked. Orstein does this with his suggestions regarding Sufism. (38)

In recent months a great commotion has been raised as a result of the cult murders in Guyana. Those who wish to detract and destroy the experiential and human growth movement argue that the adoption of many of the objectives of experiential learning by cults or communal communities alien to our accepted way of living are, by reason of the use of these tools themselves, sufficient to reject the value of the tools involved. What seems to be overlooked is that the tools of experiential learning, expanding human potential, giving meaning to life, etc., are usable in any context. Like a scalpel, they can be used to destroy people as in Guyana, or they can be used to facilitate human growth and achievement as in many of the programs at NTL, Esalen, and other places. This doesn't deny, however, that the use of these tools can be detrimental when used under the influence of certain philosophies and theories of existence and purpose or by inept, poorly trained practitioners whose purposes are suspect. Perhaps the more pointed criticism needs to be of the purposes and directions our society itself seems to be seeking.

Too many of the critics assume that the present society and its purposes and procedures is the sine qua non of effectiveness and that the status quo should be preserved at all costs.

Studies of the use of groups in the military for example, have challenged as well as confirmed some of our strongly held beliefs in the nature and influence of groups on human behavior. (39)

Two current critical examinations of the experiential and small group methods are found in the recent attack by Christopher Lasch on narcissistic culture, (40) and the current issue of the Journal of Applied Behavioral Science entitled "What's Happened to Small Group Research?"

Lasch attacks the human potential movement, the "T-group," sensitivity groups, etc., as encouraging (and reflecting) the narcissistic emphasis of our current culture.

> ...dependence on the vicarious warmth provided by other combined with a fear of dependence, a sense of inner emptiness, boundless repressed rage, and unsatisfied oral cravings...pseudo self-insight, calculating seductiveness, nervous self deprecatory humor...intense fear of old age and death, altered sense of time, fascination with celebrity, fear of competition, decline of the play spirit, deteriorating relations between men and women. (41)

Lasch claims that

> In a dying culture, narcissism appears to embody--in the guise of personal "growth" and "awareness - the highest attainment of spiritual enlightenment." (42)

However, the criticism that Lasch levels at the small group, self awareness type of training should more reasonably be leveled at the total society of which we are a part. Furthermore there is considerable doubt about the actual effect of these groups and settings on the kind of narcissistic outcome claimed by Lasch. For example, Roberts studied some of our programs at Oregon State several years ago. He found that those enrolling in the programs tested high at the outset in the dimensions of self-actualization. (43) We can hardly say that the experiences themselves created the preoccupation with the self when that was the state of being brought to the experince by the participants. Furthermore, I have some doubt about the ability of the critics to pinpoint the actual learning dimensions of the various experiential settings available. I don't believe that the human potential movement, so called, aims at the enhancement of our narcissistic dimensions. What it does do is to bring the already existing dimensions into awareness so that we can make more rational choices about what we want to do about it. If we choose to maintain or enhance our narcissism, then what of the society and culture that condition us to that choice?

One of the criticisms of the experiential and human potential work is that it emphasizes the "Me" and de-emphasizes the "Us" or the "You" in our relationships. Many of the therapeutically oriented programs seem to focus on the resolution of personal issues having to do with self needs and self perceptions. However, the studies of Lieberman, Yalom and Miles, (44) indicated that the style of leadership or facilitator varied widely in these groups and that the nature of that leadership style changed the nature of the group experience as well as the outcome of the experience. Thus, to lump all "T-groups," or encounter groups, etc., into one package and then attack them on the basis of the worst experience, in one of the groups is at best poor logic and at the worst a kind of selective or manipulative process that appears much like the manipulative advertising of the mass media.

But, it is popular now to criticize the human potential movement and to raise "warning signals" (45) Gorden attended sessions in each of the three types he writes about as well as operated as a trainer in some.

The thing I find most remarkable about Gorden's analysis is his comment that these programs, "...feed on human hurt and conflict." He must have surely been immersed in some of the violent types of experience or have had some particular difficult personal issues with which to deal. I do not find it possible to make such a generalization

after more than 30 years working in this area. If the conflict and the hurt is there it comes from the particular growth problems of the participants and has to be dealt with in the setting. The effective training program doesn't "feed" on hurt and conflict by any means. That is, there is no intent to engineer pain or to impose hurt simply as a condition of the process, as Gorden implies.

But, can growth and change occur without some pain? Is it possible to unfreeze old ways without some strain in the release and/or disposal of habits that we want to lose? Usually any change has some small or large amount of discomfort attached to it depending on the degree to which we cling to the old and resist the new. To claim that the process centers on hurt and pain represents a gross misunderstanding of growth processes. Certainly, whenever possible, the facilitation of change is sought with the minimum of hurt...or none at all if possible. Again, individuals differ in the amount of change they can accomplish without some pain. It is an individual matter and not a given condition of the growth group setting. The important thing in the effective growth group is that there is opportunity to provide for support, affection, and encouragement to attenuate what pain occurs that is not found anywhere else except in some one-to-one relationships. There is hardly anywhere else in our society

(not even in the church) where growth problems can be explored more or less openly and without the threat of painful recriminations from our social group. Keep in mind, also, that I'm not referring to the therapy mileu. It is obvious that most, if not all, of the therapeutic directions must deal with a great deal of human hurt and conflict that has debilitated the person. The therapies attempt to help the person cope with these issues.

But in the context of the growth idea, we are not dealing with therapy groups and the therapy context in spite of the attributions made by so many critics. We are dealing with the growth model and not the medical model so basic to the therapeutic mileu. Thus, Gorden's comparison of est with the "T-group" is misleading at least. They are based on quite different basic assumptions. It is this very difference in the assumption about the condition of the participants that makes the significant difference in the nature of the programs.

To assign to the experiential and growth models all the problems of the therapeutic model is to miss the very point of much of the training and development. Certainly, anyone who has been in any way connected with college and university teaching-learning in the last several decades can recognize the harshness and cruelty of the nature of much of the teaching-learning system within the university. There hasn't been much effort to examine carefully the

number of psychological casualties coming from the academic setting as a result of the pressures for grades, the tensions around exams, the social microcosm of the campus, relations with professors, the effect of the administration system, etc.

And yet, the college and university campus is probably one of the most significant "cultural islands" found in our society. People are not brought together for a day or two but for months and years at a time. Gorden's fear that the human potential movement promotes a new hedonism appears as a diversion from the fundamental issue of what we are doing on our college and university campuses in all of the programs to promote just that hedonism...or what we are doing in our mass media, our business world, etc., to encourage hedonism. To attribute this emphasis on the "new hedonism" to the human potential movement is absurd in the face of the mass media emphasis on the "me" and the hedonistic. It would seem that what is happening with such criticism is that it is diverting the attention from the substantial and critical basis of our social crises to a phenomenon that has yet to be even clearly defined and tested. The diversion is an easy way to avoid facing up to the larger social crises within our institutions.

The very fact that millions of people have turned to the human potential activities and the experiential learning process should be evidence enough of some serious gap

or barrier in our social and economic society. It would appear that people may be seeking ways to deal with the issues left unresolved by the "me" society. Better we address ourselves to those issues as they exist in our society and seek ways of coping with them. Certainly the substantive human potential and the experiential learning systems are more directly addressing themselves to dealing with some of the ills and evils of our social mileu than most of the established educational structures.

This is not to discourage nor denigrate sober, substantive reflection and study of the difficulties of the experiential processes in reaching the desired goals of social change and personal growth. (Have we really looked at contemporary American education in these terms?) In fact, the recent issue of the Journal of Applied Behavior Science entitled "What's Happened to Small Group Research" is an example of the more sober and substantial efforts to examine and evaluate one of the key processes. That series of papers found many things missing in the work being done as well as suggesting some proposals for refinement and reintegration of methods. It acknowledged the fantastic complexity of the problem of evaluation and examination and the almost limitless combinations of variables that must be studied in order to find substantive results. What it actually represented, it seems to me, was a clear challenge to the whole of education to re-examine processes, goals, values, and contexts.

I am concerned with the several criticisms of experiential learning a la the "T-group", self awareness, personal growth, etc. Much of the direction seems to be that it is not desirable to focus on personal growth and development; that such focus tends to re-inforce undesirable tendencies in all of us; that the "me" generation is operating from a false assumption about the values of life; and that the "new hedonism" or the "narcissistic personality" of our time is a step backward in social progress.

I cannot accept this position. Our very religious and social systems are based on the idea of the perfectability of the individual and of the protection of the individual in society. Our constitution and our interpretations of it emphasize protections for the individual. The essence of the capitalistic system is the freedom of the individual to operate as desired (even when it may destroy others, unfortunately). What has happened is that our concept of the individual, our actual self knowledge and the value of caring for the "other" have not been developed sufficiently to make these systems work effectively. If the essential unit of a society is the individual and if the individual must operate within that social unit it behooves us to be concerned with the nature of that individual whether it is "me" or "you". Our present social and economic systems have spawned a growing discontent with the outcomes of those

systems. Our inability to control our political, social, and economic society so as to sustain individuals (that is me and you and our relationship) is becoming more and more apparent. The rising pressure of the third world nations is a keen indicator of this.

Again, at the heart of the system is the person. But what makes a system is the interaction of persons. It would seem practical, therefore, to design educational experiences which provide both self-perception and development and the development of interaction awareness and skills. We cannot isolate the person from other persons. Neither can we deal with our groups or societies in the absence of the people comprising them.

The Self Awareness and Interpersonal Communication Workshops

And so, what the Self Awareness and Interpersonal Communication program aims to do is to provide a learning context where both the self and the other as well as us together can be examined as factors in the society and where ways and means of personal involvement and social change can be improved. It is almost as if we were starting all over again in the educational model. Back to beginnings! Back to fundamentals! Back to the basics of the human interaction! The SAIC program recognizes the many criticisms of the several processes and when these criticisms are considered realistic they effect change in

the design and the development of the SAIC approach and goals.

The general design is not unique but the particular aspects of the design each time the program is offered become unique because of the significant persons who are present. Let's take a look at the program goals and general structure.

Some Underlying Assumptions

1. The experiential learning model must include cognitive and affective structure in order to provide for the maximum learning potential. An unexamined experience and feeling is not as valuable to growth and learning as the examined one.

2. An awareness of the self and of the dimensions of self behavior is a pre and co-requisite to interaction with others that maximizes the learning and growth opportunities of that interaction.

3. The "cultural island" setting must be only a part of the larger total learning experience and not the sole function of the program.

4. Stress is an invariable concomitant with significant learning and experience. Therefore we must provide for adequate protections for those individuals who may be unable to cope with this stress productively.

5. The transferability of learnings gained in such laboratory settings is a factor of the desire and intent of the individual to make such applications. As in every other organized educational structure the student learns what he choses to learn not necessarily what the system may want him to learn. i.e., The teacher cannot do the learning for the students. The students themselves must make the decision as to what they want, how they are going to get it, and what they are going to do with it. Likewise this laboratory cannot guarantee outcomes for anyone. The outcomes depend entirely upon the person and the desire of that person to transcend the old culture with whatever new behaviors the person wishes to attempt.

6. The essential culture of the laboratory is a support culture. It is not the intent nor the structure of the work to be destructive of any individual or system. This is not to say that criticism is not expected nor provided. But no criticism should be allowed of any individual without that individual specifically calling for it and showing ability to cope with it.

7. The essential model of the laboratory is a growth and development model. It is not intended to be therapy and it attempts to bar those who are in need of therapy from attending. This is not therapy for credit!

8. Each person seeks to become more effective and more human as a person. The atmosphere of the laboratory should provide for maximum opportunities for persons to examine themselves and to seek the kind of personhood they desire to embrace.

9. The potentials of the program can only be partially exposed because they reside within the individuals who come to the program. Nevertheless as much as possible of the possible outcomes of such an experience should be brought to the attention of the potential participant.

10. The laboratory setting is not designed as a replica or microcosm of society at large. It exists as another sub society with its own unique dimensions. (Similar to the school, the church, the work place, the country club, the "mystical" orders and fraternities, etc.) Insofar as the participants bring to it compelling conditions of the larger society those conditions will become a part of this sub society.

11. Innovation, experimentation, and explanation of personal and interpersonal communication processes is important to the development of our society. The laboratory provides a place where these may be tried without the danger and threat that would occur in the larger society. Thus new behaviors may be tested here and rejected as not fitting to the larger society as well as being accepted as desirable

in the larger society. However, to assume a new behavior is desirable in the larger society is not to confirm the use of that behavior in the larger society. The testing must take place in the "back-home" setting before the new behavior can be verified as functionally useful.

12. We cannot deal with persons in the abstract or as part-person. We must deal with the whole person in any laboratory function. Thus we must be concerned with affective needs as well as cognitive needs, with physical needs as well as with mental needs, with behavior as well as theory, with theory-in-action as well as with espoused-theory. Thus opportunities for recreation, physical development and awareness as well as social and intellectual awareness must be made available.

13. The laboratory is not a non-structured laboratory. There are clearly structured programs and functions with specific objectives in content and theory understandings. Small groups, while not having specific agendas, are led by trained facilitators whose interventions are designed with specific growth and development purposes in mind.

14. The laboratory is not just a self awareness program. The interpersonal aspect of the experience carries equal significance to the personal growth aspect. (A few years ago, as a result of the research by Roberts, it was discovered that in spite of the stated goals of the laboratories

the trainers were intervening predominately on intra personal matters and not dealing with interpersonal or group process matters. The results were significant increasing in self-actualizing characteristics of the participants but no significant changes in their compatabilities with each other. This led to a change in the preparation of the trainers and an emphasis on their process-centered interventions and an increasing emphasis on the elements of compatibility. Whether this has changed the result is yet to be determined precisely, however, the observed behaviors are quite different. i.e., more skill and understanding of the group processes and of decision-making, etc., within the group.)

Some of the Goals

While each participant brings to the workshop personal goals and expectations we take the position that there is a territory or constellation of goals and potentials that are the more-or-less explicit direction of the laboratory. Individuals must relate to those goals that are more relevant or valuable to them. The spectrum of goals looks something like this:

1. To develop an increasing awareness of the intra & and interpersonal communication dimensions, problems and ways of using the process in personal growth and development.

2. Provide encouragement and opportunity for participants to experiment with different methods of interaction with others and with themselves with a minimum of risk.

3. Facilitate the awareness of self dimensions and of self goals and behavior.

4. Facilitate the awareness of relationships with other people and how they come into being and how they die.

5. Develop alternatives to ways with which we deal with ourselves and with other people through the communication process.

6. Encourage and facilitate the development of personal strategies for maximizing self potential in relations with other people.

7. Provide stimulation and support for participants as they seek opportunities to understand themselves, the goals they seek, and to assist them in developing ways to reach their goals.

8. Provide cognitive insight into the process whereby groups operate in their formulation, their decision making, their interpersonal processes, their leadership, conflict, etc.

9. Provide a background of theory which will assist in the explanation and organization of the experience of the laboratory.

10. Provide a framework, affective and cognitive, for the development of behaviors more fitting to the person in the larger social mileu.

The Workshop Design

The basic design is constantly changing. Each year there are shifts and changes brought on by prior years' experiences and new goals or insights from research. On the whole, however, the design has consistently included the following elements:

1. A small group designed to assist with developing greater self awareness and consciousness of others. This small group is assisted by a senior trainer (an experienced trainer approved by the administration of the program), by one or two "trainers-in-training" who are at various levels of their own training and development as trainers. These groups do not have pre-set agendas or tasks but are encouraged to develop agendas from members needs.

2. "Cognitive Input" sessions composed of special lecturettes, demonstrations, structured experiences, and discussions of concepts and hypotheses about the nature of self awareness, group processes, problems and barriers, criticisms, etc. (Such topics as the following have been presented in the past:

Getting into the "self"...methods, barriers, dangers, and possibilities

Being "available" for communication interaction with others

Relating the self to others - establishing contact and "Engager"

Body awareness and communication: Non verbal communication

Communication as a process

Leadership: theory, skills, and process.

Decision making: alone and in groups...

Problem Solving: alone and in groups...

The individual vs. the group

Roles, role behavior, role expectations, and group behavior

Dimensions of group growth and development

Evaluation and analysis of group behaviors

Feedback and interpersonal communication

Conflict and conflict management: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup

Power and power relations in groups, the role of authority, the role of influence

Here and Now vs. There and Then

Freedom and Conformity

Dependency vs. independence in personal and group behavior

The nature of change and its creation in persons and groups

Death and dying: Sending people away from us, saying good-bye, etc.

Giving and Taking: An element of living

Re-Entry: issues in transfer of skills and behaviors to the "back-home" setting.

et. al.

The cognitive input sessions are supported by a rather extensive library of books, tapes, reprints, etc., available to the participants.

3. Journaling: Everyone is requested to keep a journal of the experience. The basic purpose of the journal is to provide for an examination of the experience on a cognitive and analytical level. That journal is to be structured along somewhat specific lines. One of the innovations included in the journal is a set of hypotheses about group and individual behavior that is drawn from the experience for each day. This requires considerable analytical thought about the experience by each participant.

4. Analysis: Everyone is requested to submit a post conference analysis of the experience. This analysis includes such matters as (a) a description of the prior home-work-interpersonal environment existing for the person prior to their attendance at the workshop. This phase of the analysis asks the participants to examine their goals in coming to the workshop, their own status in respect to communication skills, etc., their readiness to change, problems they face in their own home setting (including work) that may restrict their application of learnings they might acquire at the workshop.

This first part of the analysis is usually requested from each person prior to their coming to the workshop.

Further aspects of the analysis include such matters as post-conference changes in awareness, in communication skills, in ability to use feedback and self disclosure, in decision making awareness, etc., as perceived by the participant. Also participants are asked to examine the degree to which their perceived needs at the beginning of the workshop were met.

The analysis includes an examination of the group processes in terms of hypotheses and examination of those hypotheses. A work-plan or strategy design for coping with the back-home situation is also requested. Participants are asked to indicate what readings they have done that were stimulated by the workshop.

This analysis is done after the immediate workshop is over. Participants take from four weeks to four months to complete the analysis and return it to the director. For those taking the workshop for academic credit the completion of the analysis is an obligation. For those who are not involved in the workshop for credit there is a "completion-of-work" fee that is included in the registration. When the analysis is completed this fee is returned to the participant. In that way we are attempting to guarantee some form of post-experience study and analysis of the

experience and an examination of the application of the experience. This procedure is not widely followed in most laboratories other than this one. We are confident that it does effect the post conference applications of the experience. Those documents have often been highly significant documents. The very process of looking back and examining the experience and studying it in light of theory, etc., appears to be an effective way of firming up some of the learnings that otherwise would be lost in the return to a resistant society. It also provides for participants to direct some attention to their personal objectives in applying skills and understandings developed at the workshop.

Outcomes

Two specific studies have been made concerning the outcomes of this program. The study by Roberts has already been mentioned here. He found that there were significant changes in self actualization characteristics of persons who participated in the workshop. (46)

Using the participants of the 1978 program as the subject of investigation, Droge collected pre-workshop data from each participant on the Communication Style Inventory. The FIRO-B, the Androgny scale, and a Self Esteem inventory. (47) The same measures were administered at the last session of the week long workshop as well as an

evaluation scale of the activities of the workshop. Six months after the workshop another data collection took place when each participant was contacted by mail and asked to complete the same set of inventories and return them. (61% replies were registered) The results indicated that there was a significant increase in the individual's awareness of his or her own communication style. "...the scenario often used by advocates of experientially-based programs to explain their success is that individuals learn how their own behavior affects others in the "cultural island" of the workshop setting and successfully employ this increased awareness when they re-enter the "real world." This study provided evidence that such a scenario may indeed be accurate..." (48) Also, "...focusing on how one's communication affects others, rather than on one's self, is more likely to result in a successful outcome of participation in "encounter"-type programs." Other data collected in the study has not yet been completely analyzed.

In several years past we have collected post workshop reports from individuals as well as the analysis documents. This data has not been formally treated but informal reviews indicate a growing amount of translatability is accruing. This is contrary to much of the criticism that is aimed at such workshops. Our data is accumulating.

Trainer Issues

After the Roberts study we found that even though our stated purposes included the development of interpersonal skills the actual change in compatibility was not significant even though there was some upward trend. With this data we initiated changes in the preparation of the trainers-in-training and in the model being used by senior facilitators. Where, in the past the facilitators had been expected to split their intervention content between personal and interpersonal issues it was discovered that what had actually been happening was that the majority of the facilitators were spending the greater part of their intervention time in person-centered rather than group-centered observations. So, in the past two summer programs we have placed greater emphasis on group-process interventions. In 1979 the trainers and the trainers-in-training were given special instruction and preparation in order to bring more emphasis to the process and interpersonal issues. The observed effects, so far, seem to be highly positive with a great deal more group development occuring without loss of the personal growth in the process.

A unique characteristic of the training team is that it is divided into two groups. The senior group consists of senior faculty members from the contributing institutions who have themselves considerable successful experience in

serving as group trainers and counselors. The junior group consists of trainers-in-training at various stages of their training development. We work on a "Three flight" system for these people. Those who are beginning their training and have the required pre-requisite experience as members of growth and process groups, enter into the basic level of work. This consists of developing their skills in observing and describing the processes taking place in their groups. Their function in the group is to report back to the group a description of what has been happening with no interpretation, etc. Those who have successfully demonstrated that they can observe process behavior, etc., may then move the second level of training. Their function in the group is to observe the function and behavior of the senior facilitator and/or co-trainer and to debrief them on what procedures were used and the observed impact of these procedures on the group. When the trainer-in-training has satisfactorily demonstrated that these functions are under control he/she is then allowed to serve as a co-trainer with the senior staff member assigned to the group.

The presence of the trainers-in-training in the group allows for each group to have a team that is working with it. It also provides some problems for the group that have to be resolved in the group setting. These problems are not designed as such but are the inevitable consequence of an in-group team working with a group.

Throughout the whole training group the principle most emphasized is that trainers must be adequately prepared and experienced in order to work with the groups. Our experience with poorly qualified but well meaning trainers has been unfortunate. There is simply no substitute for the skills and the insights of a qualified trainer. However, the particular orientation that a trainer has to the process is also important. Our philosophical and practical emphasis on both person and group in the growth model must be part and parcel of the trainer's posture in this laboratory. These emphases are worked out by the senior trainers.

CONCLUSION

The SAIC workshop is aimed at both affective and cognitive growth and development in the area of personal awareness and in interpersonal communication. We have tried to take into account the past development of theory and practice as well as many of the attacks on experiential learning and adjust our program to correct for problems actually identified. However, we make no apologies for providing some emphasis on self awareness as a prerequisite to interpersonal and group skill and development. We believe they are closely related factors and challenge our experience. The application to the larger society is a constant question and challenge. Until more sophisticated measures for

gathering information about this factor are discovered we must depend on the traditional procedures used throughout the educational system...anedote and observation of general changes in attitudes in persons.

Of course, the degree of criticism and controversy that seems to arise regarding other programs of this type would be a strong indicator that something was happening "back home" to bring the goals, rationale, and methodologies into the dialog about education. We hope similar dialogue is stimulated by this program. Surely that, among other things, would indicate a result of some value for only as we explore new ways of learning and growth will we ever come to find the next step in the educational system and to affect real change in a society very much in need of growth and development. The "existential ennui" of our time can be dealt with through such experiences.

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